

REMARKS

The applicants propose amending claims 1, 9, 14, 16, 34, 35 and 39 to improve form. The applicants also propose canceling claims 19, 22-27, 30-33, 37, 38 and 41 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3-5, 7-12, 14-17, 34-36 and 39 will be pending upon entry of this amendment.

Initially, the applicants note, with appreciation, the indication that claim 38 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the features of its base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 32 and 34-37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over alleged admitted prior art in view of Ramanathan (U.S. Patent No. 5,850,592) and further in view of Beckwith (U.S. Patent No. 6,766,143). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The applicants note that the Office Action has included claims 34-37 in the grounds of rejection based on the alleged admitted prior art, Ramanathan and Beckwith, but did not actually address claims 34-37 in the detailed rejection. The Office Action has also rejected claims 34-37 based on the alleged admitted prior art in view of Ramanathan, Beckwith and Proctor, Jr. (Office Action – page 8; discussed below). The applicants assume that the Examiner intended to include claims 34-37 with the rejection beginning at page 8 of the Office Action. However, for purposes of this amendment, both rejections will be addressed.

While not concurring with the rejection, but to expedite prosecution, claim 35, amended as proposed, includes features previously recited in claims 37 and 38. Since claim 38 was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the features of its base claim and any

intervening claims, claim 35 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 35 are respectfully requested.

Claim 36 is dependent on claim 35 and is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons claim 35 is allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 35 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 34, amended as proposed, include features similar to those recited in previous claims 37 and 38. Since claim 38 was indicated as including allowable subject matter, the applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 34 should now be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1 and 34 are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 5, 7 and 8 depend from claim 1 and are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons claim 1 is allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 3, 5, 7 and 8 are respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 9-12, 14-17, 19-27, 34-37, 39 and 41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over alleged admitted prior art in view of Ramanathan and Beckwith and further in view of Proctor, Jr. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0196822; hereinafter Proctor). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 4 is dependent on claim 1 and is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons claim 1 is allowable. Proctor does not remedy the deficiencies of the cited art with respect to amended claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 4 are respectfully requested.

While not concurring with the rejection, but to expedite prosecution, claim 35, amended as proposed, includes features previously recited in claims 37 and 38, which was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. In addition, while not concurring with the rejection, but to expedite prosecution, claims 9, 14, 34 and 39, amended as proposed, include features similar to those recited in previous claims 37 and 38. Since claim 38 was indicated as including allowable subject matter, the applicants respectfully assert that claims 9, 14, 34, 35 and 39 should now be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 9, 14, 34, 35 and 39 are respectfully requested.

Claims 10-12, 15-17 and 36 variously depend on claims 9, 14 and 35 and are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons their respective independent claims are allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 10-12, 15-17 and 36 are respectfully requested.

Claims 23, 31 and 33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the alleged admitted prior art in view of Ramanathan, Beckwith and further in view of Asghar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,218,931; hereinafter Asghar).

Claims 23, 31 and 33 have hereby been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and the timely allowance of this application. The applicants respectfully assert that the amendment should not require any further consideration or search since the amendment amends the independent claims to include features similar to those recited in previously presented claims and which were indicated as allowable. Therefore, the amendment should place the application in immediate condition for allowance. In the event that the application is not believed to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicants' representative at the number shown below to expedite prosecution of this application.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-1945, under Order No. BBNT-P01-154 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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